

Mr. & Mrs. J. S. Tamm, 1851.

AUSTRALIA
HOURS WORKED BY AGE BY SEX (CONT'D)
CROOKED PEBBLE WEEK NOT STATED

5-24 25.3A 35.0 STABED 119566

5-2A 2064 1956

1922 1 0 38014 103 13534
1922 1 3 73650 2134 83253
1921 1 4 96287 1290 78734

920 9650 1290 76139
3921 60671 27131 6521
3019 647341 1471 6205
2859 5571 1701 29850

1378
130191 61 66061 1471 6205
18591 11 647341 1501 6205
26081 161 5571 1501 29450

26081 161 508971
641 471 2584661
2172 101 58431

641	471	2584661
2172	101	584311
5944	1361	23921

59441 1361 23921
151251 381 15288
201 037 774402

151251 381 15288
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1043 1031 774402

1043 1051
57169 PERSONS, AGE 1

SIBBLI PERSONS AGE
3984 30
897 2

3984 30
8971 2
37371

229 897
6 37371
41 18341
25 15211
1 661

18341
15211
661

1114
195

1114
195
39

A close-up view of a digital scale's control panel. The visible buttons include 'TARE', 'STO', 'EXP', and 'MC'. The 'EXP' button is highlighted with a red box.

39
51
-
34
121

34
121



AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS
ANNUAL REPORT
1983-84

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ANNUAL REPORT
1983-84



Australian Government Publishing Service
Canberra 1984

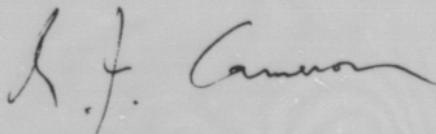
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ISSN 0314-0008

Printed by C. J. THOMPSON, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra

The Honourable P. J. Keating M.P.
Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia

In accordance with the provisions of section 24(1) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, I hereby submit to you, for presentation to Parliament, this Report for the year ended 30 June 1984.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.J. Cameron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "R.J." on the left and "Cameron" on the right.

R.J. Cameron
Australian Statistician

27 August 1984

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Note. In this Report after the first reference the Australian Bureau of Statistics is referred to as the ABS or the Bureau and the Australian Statistics Advisory Council as ASAC or the Advisory Council.

Introduction

The principal legislation determining the functions and responsibilities of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is:

- *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*
- *Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act 1956*
- *Census and Statistics Act 1905*

Under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* the Australian Statistician is required to submit to the Treasurer, for presentation to Parliament, an annual report on the operations of the Bureau. This is the ninth annual report by the Australian Statistician.

The contact for any inquiries or further information on the contents of the report is the Assistant Statistician, Co-ordination Branch at the Cameron Offices, Canberra—telephone (062) 52 5256.

Functions and management

Functions

The ABS is the central statistical authority for the Commonwealth Government and, under agreements between the Commonwealth and the States, provides statistical services for the State governments. The functions of the ABS are defined in section 6 of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* as follows:

- (a) to constitute the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and, by arrangements with the Governments of the States, provide statistical services for those Governments;
- (b) to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information;
- (c) to ensure coordination of the operations of official bodies in the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics and related information, with particular regard to—
 - (i) the avoidance of duplication in the collection by official bodies of information for statistical purposes;
 - (ii) the attainment of compatibility between, and the integration of, statistics compiled by official bodies; and
 - (iii) the maximum possible utilization, for statistical purposes, of information, and means of collection of information, available to official bodies;
- (d) to formulate, and ensure compliance with, standards for the carrying out by official bodies of operations for statistical purposes;
- (e) to provide advice and assistance to official bodies in relation to statistics; and
- (f) to provide liaison between Australia, on the one hand, and other countries and international organisations, on the other hand, in relation to statistical matters.'

In addition, under the Government-to-Government Agreements entered into with the States pursuant to the *Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act 1956*, the ABS has a responsibility to State governments to provide certain statistical services specified in the separate agreements, together with such other statistical services 'as may reasonably be required for the purposes of the State . . . '.

These arrangements offer substantial advantages. They involve fewer requests for information from people and businesses than if the Commonwealth and States both ran extensive statistical collections. They require less staff and funding than the total that would be required by separate Commonwealth and State statistical offices. They ensure the use of a single Australia-wide set of definitions in ABS collections, with consequent advantages for businesses supplying data. They keep to the forefront the desirability of interstate comparability of statistics.

A major aspect of these arrangements is that the Commonwealth agreed to meet the costs of providing a statistical service.

Organisation

Besides the Central Office in Canberra the ABS has an office located in each State, administered by a Deputy Commonwealth Statistician (DCS) who has the dual responsibility of working under the direction of the Statistician and of providing statistical services to the State Government. An office is also established in Darwin. In five of the six States (Victoria being the exception) the DCS is also the State Government Statistician.

The number and distribution of full-time operative staff in recent years is shown in the following table.

DISTRIBUTION OF FULL-TIME OPERATIVE STAFF(a)

Office	Average monthly staff numbers		
	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84
Canberra	1 615	1 627	1 640
Sydney	472	458	473
Melbourne	413	416	411
Brisbane	312	306	310
Perth	225	214	213
Adelaide	221	220	213
Hobart	127	123	122
Darwin	22	24	28
Total	3 407	3 388	3 410

(a) Excludes staff on approved leave for periods of twelve weeks or longer.

Details for 1983-84 are given in Appendix 1. The top structure and senior staff at 30 June 1984 are shown in Appendix 2.

ABS expenditure in 1983-84 was \$99.4 million, of which by far the largest component was salaries. Other large items were operating costs of the computers, and payments to field interviewers (agents). Receipts totalled \$1.3 million, mostly charges for the use of the computing installation by the Department of Trade and proceeds from 'for sale' publications. Details of both expenditure and receipts are given in Appendix 3.

The distribution of expenditure across various statistical and services activities is shown in Appendix 4. Manpower statistics comprise the largest single program and one that has increased its share of total ABS effort, along with International Accounts and Transport and Tourism.

In order to provide official statistics, the ABS undertakes a large number of separate collections, ranging from periodic censuses of industry to regular surveys to provide current economic indicators, from household surveys on specific social or economic issues to the population census. Their frequency ranges from weekly to quinquennial or even longer. In addition, the ABS devotes considerable effort, in close co-operation with Commonwealth and State administrative agencies, to producing statistical series as by-products of administrative processes such as import entry and motor vehicle registration.

Each field of statistics is the responsibility of a subject matter unit. These are organised into three Divisions: Economic Accounts, Economic Censuses and Surveys, and Demography, Social and Manpower. As far as possible, collections are undertaken within a common framework of concepts, definitions and classifications, which means that subject matter units need to operate in close consultation with each other.



Also, there is a high degree of inter-relationship with the service functions organised into the Statistical and User Services, Computer Services, and Co-ordination and Management Divisions. The first provides assistance in sample survey design and in other statistical methodology, and undertakes the field collection and processing of population survey data (details of the population surveys program are given in the next section of this report). The Division also provides a central service for the dissemination of statistics and maintains a comprehensive register of businesses and organisations.

In order to produce relevant statistics the ABS must keep in touch with users regarding their statistical requirements and with respondents to collections regarding their ability to provide data. This is done at a number of levels, and through various channels depending on the area of statistics concerned.

At the highest level, the Australian Statistics Advisory Council, which was established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, plays an active role regarding the direction and priorities of the ABS work program. The activities of the Council are described in its annual report to Parliament. The annual Conference of Statisticians, at which State governments are represented by a State official as well as by the Deputy Commonwealth Statistician in charge of each State Office of the ABS, is another forum, with particular reference to meeting State statistical needs. A statistical co-ordination and consultative mechanism also operates in each State.

The various subject matter units maintain ongoing contact with suppliers and users of data through a variety of other means including standing committees, user groups, conferences and seminars of representative organisations, and through day-to-day contact in the course of collecting and disseminating data. ABS officers outposted to government departments and authorities also play an important part in these respects.

Management

The diverse activities involved in providing official statistical services require a considerable management effort to marshall resources in an optimal fashion. From the early 1970s the ABS became increasingly aware not only of the virtual impossibility of attempting to satisfy all demands, but also of the constraints of limits on public spending and the burden placed on respondents. Efforts to respond positively and responsibly to increasing demands, while staying within these constraints, led to a reshaping of management practices. What follows is an outline of the main features of the system of management of the ABS today. A program/project framework, overlaid on the formal organisational structure, enables a co-ordinated approach to the planning, disposition and use of manpower and financial resources. Program/project managers are identified in Central Office and in each State Office. In essence this program/project management, together with the normal hierarchical line management within each office, forms the basis of an informal matrix management system across all offices.

Within this framework a rolling three year forward work program is developed. Before provision is made for staffing levels in future years, all proposals for new or extended collections are analysed to ensure that appropriate account has been taken of resource demands on the service areas whose contribution will be

essential to successful completion of the proposal. Estimates are made of staffing requirements for proposals judged to be of high priority. Staff estimates for ongoing work and for projects already approved are reviewed and extended a further year ahead. In order that feasibility studies or developmental activities are not commenced for projects unlikely to be implemented, regard is had to the total resources likely to be available to the Bureau within the three year period and to the total demands on service areas which the program would entail.

In drawing up the program, judgments about relative priorities of ongoing and proposed collections are made in the light of continuing consultations with users of statistics. Broad objectives are established for each program and specific goals to be achieved over the three year period are specified for each project.

Involvement of senior management in Central and State Offices begins in June each year. The forward work program and estimates which emerge are then examined by the Advisory Council, reconsidered in the light of its advice and then submitted to the Minister. Staff and financial estimates are forwarded to the Department of Finance.

As decisions are made by the Government on staffing and finance, resources available for the first year of the forward work program become the basis (along with the establishment of positions available to the Bureau) for controlling and monitoring the use of resources in all offices of the Bureau. Staff and financial resources, particularly for travel, overtime and payments to field interviewers, are allocated at project level to each office. The responsibility for the use of these resources lies with the respective project managers. The allocations are reviewed periodically during the year to take account of project experience and any changes in circumstances that have occurred or are foreseen. In addition, staff use and expenditure are monitored monthly at the project-by-office level.

An integral factor in this whole process is the program of reviews which has been proceeding since the mid-1970s. The purpose of the review program has been to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and to identify resources which may be diverted to other higher priority work. For statistical areas, the reviews include both statistical aspects (e.g. the purpose of the statistics and their justification) and managerial aspects (e.g. can the purpose be accomplished more efficiently and economically). The two aspects are, of course, complementary. Reviews of service activities give comparable attention to purpose, justification and managerial aspects.

Regular assessments on a program/project basis are also made to ascertain if the goals set down in the work program are being achieved. In addition, heads of Central Office Branches and of the State Offices report formally to top management, on a rotation basis, on achievement against the agreed goals. In this way overall managerial effectiveness is monitored and senior managers both in Central Office and the State Offices have an opportunity to discuss problems with top management of the ABS.

This program/project system is further enhanced by annual meetings of senior officers of the Bureau to consider general policy, statistical and administrative matters. One of the standing items on the agenda is the work program, which is discussed in detail before presentation to the Advisory Council.

From time to time, inter-office conferences are held of representatives of subject matter or service units, or those engaged on particular projects. The benefits in communication across a geographically dispersed organisation are significant.

Overlaid on these management practices are some special arrangements to ensure the successful redevelopment of computing systems. A standard systems development methodology has been adopted. All work is undertaken by multi-discipline project teams under the direction of line managers, aided by management and technical review committees. Periodic reports are furnished to senior management.

During the year the ABS took the initiative to have a Joint Management Review undertaken of the top management role in State offices and Management Service functions in all offices of the ABS. The Review commenced towards the end of the year.

The ABS Program of Population Surveys

Introduction

Each year the ABS undertakes a program of population surveys in which data are collected on a wide range of topics by interviews with members of a sample of households. This section of the Annual Report describes the surveys, past and future topics covered by the survey program, and some general characteristics of population surveys.

The surveys comprise:

- The monthly population survey, which has two components:
 - the monthly labour force survey covering employment, unemployment and a range of associated labour force data, and
 - in most months, the collection of data on a particular topic, as a supplement to the monthly labour force survey interview; and
- Special supplementary surveys, conducted periodically on topics which require more extensive data and interviewing than is possible in a supplementary survey.

Monthly population survey

The main component of the monthly population survey is the monthly labour force survey (MLFS) from which statistics are produced of employment and unemployment and associated characteristics such as the occupations and industry of employees and the number of hours they work. Prior to February 1978, the survey was conducted on a quarterly basis. First results from this survey are produced within two weeks from the end of the month to which they relate, and more detail is released during the following month. In view of the importance of these statistics as a key economic indicator, the MLFS is given a high priority.

Over the years, the ABS has used the monthly population survey as a vehicle for a supplementary collection of data on topics of social or economic importance. This is done for a different topic (or topics) in each month except December, January, and March or April, when the movement of people during holiday periods has a disruptive effect on the collection of data. Most of them relate to manpower topics, a number of which are now collected regularly in particular months each year to enable the production of annual series. October is reserved for supplementary topics nominated by each State Government.

Supplementary surveys have proved to be a most efficient and cost-effective method for increasing the ABS' capacity to respond to users' needs for statistics on important and topical subjects. A typical supplementary survey has a marginal cost over the MLFS of approximately \$35,000. A list of topics covered by recent and planned supplementary surveys is shown in Appendix 5.

The manpower topics provide detailed information about the characteristics of persons who are employed, unemployed or not in the labour force. Particular attention is given to persons who have changed their labour force status i.e. from being employed to being unemployed, or from being employed to being not in the labour force, or other combinations of these states. The rapidly changing structure of the labour market requires relatively frequent measurement of these changes. In February, May, August and November, as part of the MLFS, respondents are asked details about their occupations, and the industries in which they work. Wherever possible, supplementary topics that also require these data are scheduled for these months.

The monthly population survey collects relevant data about all people over the age of 15 in about 33,000 selected dwellings. Each selected dwelling is included in the survey for eight consecutive months, with one-eighth of the sample replaced by new dwellings each month. After a dwelling has been in the sample for eight surveys it is replaced by another dwelling, so that the reporting burden is spread more widely across the community. This approach has been adopted to obtain accurate and economical measurement of changes from month to month in the statistics being collected without placing an inordinate burden on those selected for interview. If a completely new sample were selected each month, a much larger sample would be required to obtain information with the same degree of accuracy in measuring month-to-month changes. This would increase costs and require surveying many more people each month. The first responsible adult contacted by the interviewer is asked questions about all people in the household who are within the scope of the survey.

An interview of a typical household takes just under a quarter of an hour, which covers both the labour force survey and the supplementary survey. The annual cost of the monthly population survey for payment of interviewers, office staff to process the data, travel expenses, etc. is about \$4.5 million.

Special supplementary surveys

Special supplementary surveys (SSS) provide a method of collecting data on topics which require more information and interviewing than can conveniently be accommodated as part of the monthly population survey, or require a personal interview with each individual in the household.

The sample size for an SSS varies according to the requirements for data on a particular topic or topics. It can be as large as for the monthly population survey but typically is half that or less. A typical SSS such as the survey of income costs about \$500,000 in payments to interviewers, office processing staff, travel, etc. plus about 30 staff years to develop and manage. Typically, the interviews last for 30-40 minutes in each household. However, a large SSS like the Household Expenditure Survey (on which more detail is given below) costs \$1.7 million in payments to interviewers, etc. and requires over 80 staff years to develop and manage.

The SSS facility has proved to be a valuable means of collecting statistics on important topics of contemporary interest, particularly in the social field. Having once obtained statistics on a topic, users are often keen for a survey on that topic to be repeated after a few years, in order to have the benefit of a series

which can measure changes over time. On the other hand, there are continuing demands from other users for new topics to be included in the SSS program. Given that there is a limit to how many such surveys can be mounted, this conflict between demands for repetition and new topics poses a real dilemma for the ABS in trying to satisfy the needs of users.

A list of topics covered by recent and planned special supplementary surveys is shown in Appendix 5.

Household Expenditure Survey

The Household Expenditure Survey (HES) is being conducted throughout 1984 to obtain statistics on consumption expenditure and income of households for the following purposes:

- Analysis of changes in expenditure and income patterns since the last HES conducted in respect of 1975-76.
- Updating of the weighting patterns used to compile the Consumer Price Index.
- Analysis of the expenditure and income of various groups (e.g. pensioners, one parent families, the unemployed).
- Analysis of expenditure and income patterns of low income households, which will be particularly valuable for constructing equivalence scales for use in the analysis of poverty.
- Examination of the effect of changes in pensions, benefits and taxes on the patterns of household consumption expenditure and the distribution of household income.
- Development of government policy and planning in areas such as housing, health and transport, on which the survey provides expenditure data.
- Comparison of expenditure patterns in rural and urban households.
- Improvement of estimates of private final consumption expenditure used in the National Accounts.

Some of the information is being collected by interviewing people about certain types of expenditure in the recent past. In addition, all household members aged 15 years and over are being asked to record in a specially-designed diary all payments made over a two week period (four weeks in rural areas). Interviews and diary keeping are spread across different households over the full twelve months to avoid possible seasonal bias in the measurement of income and spending patterns.

The ABS is very aware of the sensitivity of seeking information on household and personal income and expenditure. Special attention has therefore been given to interviewer training, questionnaire design and obtaining community understanding of the reasons for the survey. There has in fact been a very high degree of co-operation by the selected households in providing data during the first six months of the survey.

The first publication of statistics from the HES is expected to be in July 1985.

General characteristics of population surveys

Because population surveys cover a representative sample of the Australian population they have an important advantage over alternative forms of data collection. While data collected from administrative sources can be relatively simple and cheap to collect, the coverage of the resultant statistics is restricted to only those people who are included in the administrative system. For example, crime statistics compiled from administrative records can only cover crimes reported to the police. Commonwealth Employment Service statistics of the unemployed can only cover persons who register with the CES. On such subjects the statistics obtained from a population survey have a wider coverage.

On the other hand, sample surveys cannot provide data for geographical regions containing relatively small numbers of people, so that they do not assist authorities in choosing particular locations for health or welfare facilities, for example. Likewise, they cannot measure characteristics of small minority groups within the population.

Population surveys impose a burden on the occupants of households selected to participate. Most of the people included in the ABS surveys appreciate the need for statistics to be collected and that information identifiable with particular households or persons is not retained by the ABS or ever communicated outside the ABS. Therefore they co-operate freely. Nevertheless the ABS is very conscious of the burden which it imposes, and seeks to minimise this in all ways possible. Questionnaires and topics are rigorously examined to ensure that all the items are necessary, and the sample of dwellings is changed systematically to ensure that the burden on households is spread as evenly as possible.

It is clear that the public regards questions on certain topics as more intrusive than others. Topics proposed for inclusion in the surveys are carefully evaluated with this in mind and questionnaires are fully tested before being adopted. For example, while statistics on the income distribution of the population are essential for Commonwealth and State agencies concerned with aspects of social welfare, questions on income are regarded as intrusive by a significant proportion of the population. Where possible, respondents are asked to indicate the range within which their income falls rather than a specific figure.

A further factor in considering topics for inclusion in the population surveys is that people as a rule do not keep good personal records, in comparison with, say, businesses. Thus there are many topics proposed for collection in population surveys which prove unsuitable when tested. Memories are fallible and questions which require people to recall even comparatively recent events often prove to yield unreliable results.

Data are obtained in the population surveys by carefully selected and trained interviewers, generally from a responsible adult who answers on behalf of all members of the selected household. However, for some surveys it is necessary for all relevant persons in the household to be interviewed. The interviewer approach makes possible the collection of certain information which could not be obtained reliably in any other fashion. The training given to interviewers assists them to explain the reasons for the survey, explain difficult concepts, guide the respondents through the more complex questionnaires and allay any misgivings about participation in the survey. This is most important, as the person who properly understands the survey is more likely to co-operate freely and therefore provide useful information.

Planning the population surveys program

Because population surveys are such an important source of statistics about the population, there is considerable demand for them from the Commonwealth and State Governments, far more than the ABS can accommodate within the limits of the amount of staff, expertise and funds available. This involves difficult choices between competing survey topics, between introducing a new survey topic or repeating a topic to obtain comparative data over time, and about the number of questions which can be directed to each topic.

The magnitude and complexity of the total program of surveys requires considerable co-ordination and planning. The population survey program is developed within the framework of the overall ABS annual planning cycle. In addition to its ongoing contact with users, each year the ABS seeks submissions from users on their requirements for statistics on topics for which the population survey could be the appropriate vehicle. Requests are examined both as to their individual viability and how they can best be accommodated within the population survey framework and program as a whole.

Besides considering the intended uses of the results of each survey individually, co-ordinated planning takes into account:

- the desirability of consistent time series.
- provision of survey results when best suited to their intended uses, while at the same time dovetailing the development and operations work of different surveys as far as practicable.
- the availability of suitably trained personnel, computer processing and various other facilities needed.

ABS Activities in 1983-84

During the year the ABS continued its attempts to satisfy the considerable demand for more or better statistics, within the constraints of available resources and the need to limit respondent burden. Some of the main innovations and activities during the year are outlined below.

On the economic statistics side, the reintroduction of foreign participation studies saw the publication of figures on foreign ownership and control of mining and selected mineral processing industries. New statistics on quarterly shipping and air cargo commodity and monthly cash management trusts were published. Statistics from periodic collections were published on motor vehicle usage, the wholesale trade industry and the retail trade industry in the Northern Territory. A new series of quarterly statistics was published on employment, average weekly earnings, job vacancies and overtime.

Periodic collections during the year included a census of public and private sector self-administered superannuation funds and collections of data needed to undertake further studies of foreign participation.

The program of household surveys on manpower and social topics continued. Results were published of surveys on income, housing and characteristics of families. A major survey commenced on household income and expenditure. The topics of other household surveys conducted in 1983-84 included crime victims, health care and insurance, child immunisation and dental services.

Proposals tabled in Parliament for the collection of additional statistics are listed in Appendix 6.

Throughout the year, output from the 1981 Population Census continued in the form of publications, microfiche, magnetic tapes and maps, the latter including a new series of social atlases for capital cities. In addition, the ABS continued to respond to thousands of individual requests for census data.

Development of the 1986 Population Census accelerated during the year, including release of preliminary ABS views on topics, resulting from extensive public consultation and testing. The content of the next Census will be decided by the Government later in 1984.

Looking ahead, the main collections planned are a new transport industry survey in 1984-85, a construction industry survey in 1985-86, and a retail industry survey and the next population census in 1986-87. Existing collections will continue to be reviewed against users' needs and priorities. Development of new or revised computing systems will continue to be a major activity.

Details follow of the main activities in each program.

Economic Statistics

Economic censuses are designed to provide detailed information on industry structure and to facilitate valid comparisons across geographical areas and between different industries. Surveys of selected businesses are designed to provide timely and regular indicators of economic activity. Economic censuses and surveys are also important sources of data for national accounts estimates and input-output tables.

National accounts

The system of national accounts presents, in a systematic and comprehensive way, summaries of economic transactions that take place in the Australian economy and between Australia and the rest of the world. The usefulness of the accounts derives largely from the way in which data are brought together from virtually all available sources and presented as far as possible in a conceptually consistent way both for a given period and over time. The accounts are basically in accordance with the United Nations System of National Accounts.

To present a current picture of the national economy, summary national income and expenditure accounts are published as soon as possible after the end of each quarter, in terms of both current and constant prices. However, much of the more reliable information needed for the accounts does not become available until long after the publication of preliminary figures. Estimates for the most recent quarters are therefore based on limited data and successive revisions are necessary as additional information becomes available.

A more detailed and more firmly based picture of the national economy is provided by various annual publications such as the input-output tables, estimates of gross product by industry and the annual national income and expenditure publication.

Activities during the year included:

- Research into the effects of changing the reference year of the prices used in constant price estimates. It is hoped to publish the results during 1984-85.
- Publication of an Occasional Paper, giving estimates by ABS officers of gross product by State, for the years 1977-78 to 1980-81.
- Publication in May 1984 of input-output tables in respect of 1978-79. This is the second in a series of annual input-output publications.

International accounts

The international accounts program produces statistics on the balance of payments, foreign investment, and foreign ownership and control.

Activities during the year included:

- Implementation of further improvements in the presentation and availability of balance of payments and foreign investment statistics. Additional monthly detail of exports, imports, 'invisibles' and capital transactions were made available on request, as well as comprehensive tables bringing together annual estimates of the levels of Australia's foreign financial assets and liabilities.

- Publication of more accurate and timely quarterly estimates of Australian investment abroad, mainly as a result of the introduction, from September quarter 1983, of a quarterly survey of Australian direct investment abroad.
- Completion of work on the transfer of responsibility, from the Reserve Bank of Australia to the ABS with effect from 1 July 1984, for the monthly 'ticket' collection of non-trade foreign receipts and payments. In conjunction with the transfer, improvements in the efficiency of the collection and reductions in the reporting burden on banks will be achieved.
- Study of the implications for balance of payments and foreign investment statistics of Australia's new foreign exchange arrangements. The monthly and quarterly balance of payments publications included a section on *The Interpretation of Balance of Payments Statistics Under the Changed Exchange Rate Arrangements*.
- Commencement of redesign of the computer processing systems used for foreign investment and balance of payments statistics. This is expected to result in improved statistics in these fields, including more timely publication.
- Publication of foreign ownership and control statistics for the mining industry and selected mineral processing industries in respect of 1981-82.
- Completion of a survey of shareholdings as at 30 June 1983. The results will be used, in conjunction with data from other ABS collections, to produce further publications on foreign ownership and control for a number of industries including mining and manufacturing and in respect of new capital expenditure by private enterprises.
- A survey of the ownership of agricultural businesses and agricultural land as at 31 March 1984. The data will be used, in conjunction with the 1984 Agricultural Census, to provide statistics on the extent of foreign ownership and control of agricultural businesses and foreign ownership of agricultural land, classified by State and by industry.

Prices

In addition to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the prices program includes indexes relating to foreign trade, inputs and outputs of manufacturing industry, and materials used in the building industry.

Activities during the year included:

- Publication of *The Australian Consumer Price Index: Concepts, Sources and Methods*, aimed at providing users with a better understanding of the CPI.
- Commencement of the next periodic review of data items and reweighting of the CPI, tentatively scheduled for completion in the second half of 1986. This review will make use of information on expenditure patterns obtained from the 1984 Household Expenditure Survey.
- Continuation of a review and reweighting of the price index of materials used in manufacturing industry, including the development of separate 'materials used' price indexes for manufacturing subdivisions of the Australian Standard Industrial Classification.

- Commencement of a major investigation into the extent and effects on reported prices of the discounting practices of businesses providing information for building materials price indexes and price indexes of articles produced by manufacturing industry. The results of the investigation, which is expected to be completed in late 1984, are being used to revise previously published index series and to enable more accurate price data to be collected in the future.

Public finance

The major objective of the public finance program is to provide statistical information on revenue, outlay and financing transactions of Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments and their subsidiary bodies.

In addition to a range of annual publications, the program is responsible for the compilation of quarterly statistics for inclusion in the national accounts and the provision of detailed financial statistics, for individual local government authorities, on magnetic tape and microfiche.

Activities during the year included:

- Publication of *Government Finance Statistics, Australia : Classifications Manual* which outlines major concepts and definitions for revised classifications of public sector units and their transactions. Adoption of the revised classifications and implementation of a new processing system is expected to result in the publication of more accurate and timely statistics.
- A review of the public sector component of the quarterly national accounts estimates, with the aim of implementing from early 1985 improvements in coverage, range of data collected and estimation methodology.

Private finance

The private finance program collects data on the lending activity and financial structure of banks, building societies, credit unions, finance companies, insurance companies, cash management trusts and superannuation funds. Several of the collections are undertaken in co-operation with authorities such as the Reserve Bank of Australia, the Insurance Commissioner, and State registrars of building societies and credit unions.

Activities during the year included:

- Introduction of an integrated set of collection forms for non-bank financial institutions covered under the Financial Corporations Act, and three new monthly lending activity collections. This joint project of ABS, Treasury and the Reserve Bank was carried through in close consultation with the institutions concerned and will reduce respondent burden, increase data available on lending activity, and achieve greater consistency of definitions and concepts across collections. It is hoped to extend rationalisation to other collections from banks.
- A census of public and private sector self-administered superannuation funds in respect of 1982-83. Results of the census will enable substantial improvement of the annual survey of this sector.
- Publication, in September 1983, of the first results of a new monthly collection from cash management trusts.
- Commencement of a feasibility study into a collection from unit trusts.

- Cessation of ABS involvement in collection and publication of life insurance statistics, as a result of a review undertaken with the Treasury and the Office of the Life Insurance Commissioner. A similar review of general insurance statistics is continuing in conjunction with the Treasury and the Office of the Insurance Commissioner.
- Continuation of a feasibility study into a collection from superannuation funds whose assets are wholly invested with life insurance offices.

Agriculture

The agriculture program includes an annual agricultural commodity census, a periodic agricultural finance survey, commodity surveys and a range of derived statistics, including the value of agricultural commodities produced and the apparent consumption of foodstuffs and nutrients. Activities during the year included the publication of the first issue of *Directory of Agricultural Statistics, Australia*, which informs users of the data available from the ABS.

Construction

The main projects in the construction program are monthly statistics of building approvals and dwelling commencements as reported by local government and other approving authorities, quarterly surveys of building activity and of construction (other than building), and a periodic survey of the construction industry.

Activities during the year included:

- Preliminary work for a construction industry survey in respect of 1984-85, including investigations to improve the statistics on public sector construction activity both in that survey and subsequently in the quarterly construction (other than building) collection.
- Commencement of a study to assess the value of alterations and additions to houses which are outside the scope of the building activity survey. This is aimed at improving national accounting estimates of expenditure on dwellings.
- Publication in most States of preliminary monthly estimates of dwelling unit commencements, as reported by approving authorities.

Trade

The trade program covers statistics of exports, imports, imports cleared for home consumption, shipping, excise and interstate trade. In addition to monthly and annual foreign trade publications, many special tabulations are undertaken on request and many users subscribe to a service which provides them with regular monthly or quarterly information on individual commodities.

Activities during the year included:

- Preparation for the expected adoption in Australia, from January 1987, of a new International Convention for the description and coding of imported and exported goods, entitled the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System (HCDGS).

- Publication in December 1983 of new quarterly shipping and air cargo commodity statistics.
- Development and implementation of a new processing system for shipping data, with the aim of increasing the range and improving the timeliness of the statistics published.

Transport

The transport program covers the collection and dissemination of monthly statistics on new motor vehicle registrations and road traffic accidents involving fatalities, quarterly statistics on road traffic accidents and interstate road freight movements, annual statistics on the rail industry, a triennial survey of motor vehicle usage and motor vehicle census, and a periodic economic survey of the transport industry.

Activities during the year included:

- Publication of statistics from the triennial survey of motor vehicle usage for the year ended 30 September 1982.
- Completion of development work on the first transport industry survey, to be conducted in respect of 1983-84. The survey will provide statistics on the structure and operations of businesses engaged in all modes of transport. In addition, because a large proportion of road freight activity is undertaken by businesses outside the transport industry, the ABS will conduct a separate but related survey covering road freight activity by businesses in other industries such as manufacturing, mining, retailing and construction.
- Adoption by relevant government authorities of guidelines developed by the ABS for classification of road vehicle accidents. The aim is to increase the range and consistency of national statistics on road traffic accidents.

Tourism

The tourism program includes a quarterly survey of tourist accommodation activity and other periodic surveys.

Activities during the year included:

- Commencement of a review of user needs for statistics relating to tourism, in conjunction with the Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism.
- Completion of a household survey of domestic travel patterns during the period February 1983 to January 1984. Information from this survey is expected to be released later in 1984 and includes duration of trip, origin and destination, time of year and main purpose of trip as well as type of accommodation used.

Mining and energy

The main element in this program is an annual census of the mining industry, conducted with the co-operation and assistance of State government mines departments. The census provides data on the structure and operations of the industry, comparable with those available in respect of manufacturing industry. The program also includes energy statistics and quarterly and annual figures of mineral exploration effort.

Activities during the year included:

- Publication of statistics on domestic appliances and type of energy used, which were obtained from the June 1983 national household energy survey. These data are currently being matched with electricity consumption of each household in the survey, to enable an analysis of consumption patterns and appliances in use.
- Investigations into the feasibility of conducting, in respect of 1985-86, a household survey of domestic energy usage, and a survey of energy stocks and usage in the business sector.

Manufacturing

The manufacturing program includes annual censuses of manufacturing and electricity and gas production and distribution, and monthly and quarterly surveys of manufacturing production.

Activities during the year included completion of a revised commodity classification and other development work required for the collection in the 1983-84 census of information on materials used.

Retailing and wholesaling

This program includes a monthly survey of retail sales and periodic censuses or surveys of the retail, wholesale and selected service industries.

Activities during the year included:

- Publication of the results of a survey of the wholesale trade industry in respect of 1981-82, the first since 1968-69. The survey provided data on the structure and operations of the industry comparable with those provided for other industries.
- Publication of the results of a Northern Territory retail census in respect of 1982-83. Because of the relatively small size of the retail sector of the Territory economy, it is not covered by the monthly sample survey of retail trade.
- A wide-ranging assessment of user needs and evaluation of alternative collection strategies for periodic retail industry statistics, leading to a proposal to conduct a retail and selected service establishments collection in respect of 1985-86.

Enterprise statistics

This program provides timely indicators of key aspects of economic activity in Australia, derived from quarterly sample surveys of actual and expected capital expenditure (for Australia and each State), stocks, and actual and expected manufacturers' sales and operating surplus. Coverage of the survey of operating surplus is being progressively widened.

Enterprise statistics are also derived from the periodic economic censuses and surveys.

The program includes surveys of expenditure and manpower devoted to research and experimental development in Australia.

Classification

This program develops and maintains statistical classifications used by the ABS and other government agencies. Classifications, together with other conceptual standards, define and present in logical structures the data items (such as

commodities) and the broader economic and other categories (such as industries and geographical areas) in respect of which statistics can be collected, compiled and published. Classifications are thus a major determinant of the usefulness of statistical output. The principal classifications and related standards covered by the program are industry, commodity, geographic and economic sector classifications.

Activities during the year included:

- Update of the Australian Standard Commodity Classification for 1981-82 and 1982-83 and commencement of work on the 1983-84 edition. This classification enables comparable commodity statistics of imports, exports and domestic production to be compiled and serves as a framework for improving comparability between commodity items in ABS statistical series.
- Publication of the Australian Transport Freight Commodity Classification, 1983-84 and an interim Australian Pack Classification.
- Continued participation in the review by the United Nations Statistical Office of the Standard International Trade Classification, the International Standard Industrial Classification and related classifications.
- Completion of the review of ABS economic sector classifications, including the public sector/private sector classification, which aims to improve the framework for the collection and publication of economic statistics.
- Development of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification, of which the first edition is expected later in 1984.

Economic statistics integration

This program provides a service to other statistical programs by co-ordinating the planning of economic censuses and surveys and by establishing and maintaining standard concepts and definitions.

Activities during the year included:

- Completion, in conjunction with the Australian Taxation Office, of a report to the Treasurer recommending amendment of the Income Tax Assessment Act to permit ABS access, on a confidential basis for statistical purposes only, to information from the income tax records of identified businesses.
- Completion of a reference manual for use within the ABS on standard concepts and definitions relating to the treatment of business units for statistical purposes.
- Continuation of development of standard concepts and definitions for non-profit organisations and for trusts.

Demographic, social and manpower statistics

A wide range of statistics is produced on many aspects of the Australian community, ranging from births, deaths and marriages, through health, welfare, education, crime, employment and unemployment. A large amount of data is collected at the quinquennial censuses of population and housing, and other demographic, social and manpower statistics are derived as by-products of administrative processes, from household surveys and from surveys of businesses.

Population census

During 1983-84 the ABS continued to produce a large volume of data in various forms from the 1981 Census of Population and Housing. The program of statistical publications was completed, but statistics continued to be released in microfiche form.

The small area data base system, which enables a wide range of aggregated data for geographic areas specified by users to be provided at short notice, continued to be used extensively. In terms of the number of individual users serviced, this system constituted the main vehicle for the dissemination of census data. The production of very detailed tables on magnetic tape, in accordance with user specifications (subject to constraints to avoid releasing identifiable data), increased during the year. The provision of data in this form, in which a limited range of characteristics are cross-classified in detail, allows users of census data to carry out further computer analyses of the selected data. Two magnetic tape files containing data from samples of unidentified households and persons were also released to enable users to carry out statistical analyses.

A series of social atlases for major metropolitan areas based on 1981 Census data is being produced jointly by the ABS and the Division of National Mapping, with text contributed by members of the Institute of Australian Geographers. Volumes for Canberra and Adelaide were published during 1983-84, and volumes for the other State capitals will be published during the remainder of 1984.

Development activities for the 1986 Census increased during 1983-84. In February 1984, the ABS published an Information Paper *Preliminary ABS Views on the Content of the 1986 Census*. This Paper contains the ABS evaluations and preliminary recommendations on topics suggested for the 1986 Census, following on the hundreds of topic submissions received and extensive consultations with users. Adoption of the preliminary recommendations would result in the content of the 1986 Census questionnaire being similar in size to the 1981 Census.

In 1982 a Committee was established under the chairmanship of Emeritus Professor W.D. Borrie to investigate ways of improving the information to be

gathered in the 1986 Census on the ethnic background of Australia's population. The Committee's report was released to the public in April 1984, together with the ABS preliminary views on ethnicity topics for inclusion in the 1986 Census.

The Committee recommended, amongst other things, that census information on the ethnic background of the population would be enhanced by the inclusion of a question in the Census on people's ancestry. Pilot tests have indicated that obtaining useful answers to the question presents some difficulties, but in view of the interest in data on ethnicity, the preliminary view of the ABS is that an ancestry question should be included.

Another important development is related to family data. Planned improvements to the collection of information on usual residents absent on census night, 'blended families', and persons residing in caravan parks, together with improved procedures for the coding of related data, will improve census statistics on family structures in Australia.

Comments from users and the public on the ABS preliminary views were taken into account in preparing recommendations on the content of the 1986 Census for the consideration of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council. The next stage is a submission to the Government later in 1984.

Field tests were conducted during 1983 and 1984 to assess the effectiveness of questions on new topics and to improve questions on regular topics. Data collected in these tests were used to evaluate new methodology and equipment to be used in processing the 1986 Census.

Field work for the collection phase of the 1986 Census also commenced in early 1984 with the design of statistical boundaries and the preparation of field maps.

Demography

The program includes statistics on births, deaths, marriages, divorces, overseas migration and internal migration. Quarterly estimates are made of the age, sex and geographic distribution of the Australian population. Forward projections according to stated demographic assumptions are also published from time to time.

Activities during the year included:

- Preparation of statistics of births and deaths on the basis of place of usual residence rather than State or Territory of occurrence, to be published later in 1984. This is consistent with population estimates which are on a usual residence basis.
- Publication of five Occasional Papers, dealing with fertility trends, aged persons and mortality trends in Tasmania; the methodology of quarterly interstate migration estimates for 1966-81; and projections of Australian mortality rates for 1981-2021.

Social

The social program includes statistics relating to health, education, crime, justice and other social matters.

Activities during the year included:

- Continuing development, in association with the Commonwealth Schools Commission, of a new non-government schools collection. This collection, conducted in June-July 1984 and annually thereafter, will provide results comparable with the existing government schools collection.
- Publication of statistics on criminal and child welfare matters finalised in the courts of Victoria and Tasmania. Publications for other States will follow. The statistics are based on national standards, formulated in conjunction with relevant State government agencies.
- A survey in May 1984 to determine the extent of health insurance cover of wage and salary earners in capital cities.
- Publication of results from a survey held in South Australia in October 1983 to obtain information on alcohol consumption patterns.
- Publication of statistics on persons employed in health occupations and industries, compiled from the 1981 Population Census. Further publications will cover people providing education and justice services, and people living in hospitals, prisons and associated institutions.
- Development of a publication, to be released about the end of 1984 as an ABS contribution to International Youth Year (1985), drawing together statistics on young people in Australia.

Social surveys and standards

The program has three main streams of work—development, processing and dissemination of data from social surveys; compilation of statistics on specific social welfare groups; and establishment of guidelines for the integrated development of social and demographic statistics through standard concepts, definitions and classifications.

Activities during the year included:

- Release of data from the 1982 Family Survey, including the factors influencing family formation, growth, break-up and re-formation; the support provided for child care and care of aged relatives; and aspects of the financial support received by the family.
- Publication of summary results from the survey of income and housing conducted from September to November 1982. More detailed results will be released during 1984-85.
- Completion of the first edition of the Australian Standard Welfare Activities Classification, developed jointly by the ABS and welfare departments.

Manpower

The manpower program provides statistics on the components and characteristics of the labour force such as employment and unemployment, earnings, hours of work and other working conditions. It also covers job vacancies, industrial accidents, industrial disputes and trade union membership.

Monthly estimates of employment and unemployment are based on the labour force survey of a sample of households. In most months of the year, supplementary questions are asked on detailed aspects of the labour force, including, in 1983-84, persons not in the labour force and persons marginally attached to the labour force, discouraged jobseekers, persons looking for work, weekly earnings of employees and non-wage employment benefits, labour mobility, labour force experience during the twelve months to February, educational attainment, multiple jobholding, persons retired from full time work, annual, long service and sick leave, apprentices, attendance at educational institutions and transition from education to work. A regular flow of publications, containing the results of these monthly surveys, continued throughout the year.

In addition, data from a special survey conducted in the previous year, using the framework of the household surveys, were published on coverage of persons by superannuation or life assurance policies, and on the career paths of tradesmen and the reasons why some tradesmen were not working in their trades.

Other activities during the year included:

- More timely publication of survey data following the introduction of a new computer processing system for the program of household surveys.
- Publication of revised estimates of employment and unemployment back to February 1978 to align them with revised publication estimates resulting from the 1981 Census.
- Introduction of a set of new quarterly surveys of businesses and government agencies to obtain statistics on employment, average weekly earnings, job vacancies and overtime. Publication of the new series of these statistics commenced in June 1984.
- In conjunction with the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, the continued development of the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO). Its first use for statistical purposes will be in the 1986 Census of Population and Housing, followed by the Labour Force Surveys shortly thereafter.

Other Activities

Computer services

The central computing installation was upgraded in the first half of 1984 at a net cost of approximately \$8m, about doubling its computing power. Additional data storage will be added towards the end of 1984 and in mid-1985. This will represent completion of the acquisition plan proposed by the ABS in the mid-1970s.

The communications network connecting ABS offices in all State capital cities to the central computing installation was completed during the year. The data entry facilities acquired in the early 1970s will be replaced in all ABS offices in early 1985.

During the year the ABS set in train a study of strategic directions for computer services over the next decade. The first results of this study will be incorporated in the 1985 ADP Strategic Plan.

The redevelopment of statistical systems for use on the new equipment continues to be a major operation involving staff from most areas of the ABS. Some one hundred systems are now operating on the new equipment, including those for foreign trade, the agricultural census, public authority finance, retail surveys, labour force surveys, employer surveys, the population census and the ABS register of businesses.

The transfer of statistical work from the computing equipment acquired in the 1960s has now been completed and the equipment removed. Work has commenced on the redevelopment and transfer of systems currently running on the computer equipment acquired in the 1970s; major systems involved are those processing the economic censuses and surveys and those using time series facilities.

A small number of stand-alone micro-computers were acquired during 1983-84 for experimental purposes on a range of statistical and administrative activities. In the light of this experience two further micro-computers have been acquired for operational purposes.

Training of specialist computer staff and statistical subject matter staff on all aspects of computing has continued at a high level. Numbers of courses, those attending and the total staff years spent on courses in 1983-84 were:

	Courses	Attendees	Staff years
Computer Specialists	40	827	13.8
General training (mainly subject matter officers)	193	1 835	32.4

Statistical methodology

This program provides a specialised service in field survey operations, sampling, time series analysis and other mathematical statistical techniques. Specialist services are also provided on a consultative basis to other Commonwealth and State agencies. Examples of this type of service provided during 1983-84 are:

- Department of Employment and Industrial Relations—assistance in assessing the statistical methodology associated with certain projects for which funding was sought under the Commonwealth Community Employment Program.
- Department of Primary Industry—assistance with the design and analysis of a trial into the effectiveness of revised post-mortem inspection procedures for the detection of disease in animals slaughtered for human consumption; and development of quality control procedures for use in monitoring the quality of dried fruit for export.
- Bureau of Agricultural Economics—assistance with the design and sample selection of a detailed survey of meat consumption patterns to be conducted on behalf of the Australian Meat Research Council.
- Schools Commission—assistance with the construction of a socio-economic indicator for use in the allocation of funds in the Disadvantaged Schools Program.
- Capital Territory Health Commission—assistance with the design and sample selection of a survey to measure the health status of residents in the ACT.
- Australian Tourist Commission—advice on an appropriate estimation methodology for an International Visitors Survey.
- New South Wales Department of Leisure, Sport and Tourism—development of a survey package on recreational needs for use by local councils.
- University of Queensland Dental Care Research Unit—assistance with sample design and methodology of a survey to measure the dental health status of adults.
- Western Australian Public Health Department—assistance with a survey of school children to estimate the incidence of cigarette smoking.

Dissemination of statistics

A complete list of ABS publications, together with a description of their contents and a subject index, is contained in the *ABS Catalogue of Publications, Australia*, copies of which are available on request from ABS offices and bookshops of the Australian Government Publishing Service.

In addition to publications, a large amount of more detailed information is available on request in forms such as computer printout, microfiche and magnetic tape. Standard releases of statistics on microfiche and magnetic tape are listed in the 1984 issue of the catalogue.

In 1983-84 the ABS published 514 monthly, quarterly, annual or irregular titles in a total of 1,566 issues, ranging from single-page publications to large volumes such as *Year Book Australia*. This compares with 535 titles and 1516 issues in 1982-83.

PUBLICATIONS ISSUED DURING 1983-84

	Number of Titles								Number of Issues	
	State Offices									
	Can- berra	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	NT		
Annual	95	29	24	38	27	19	29	5	266	298
Quarterly	48	4	5	7	3	4	6	3	80	273
Monthly	52	5	5	6	4	3	5	1	81	903
Other	51	7	6	7	2	5	6	3	87	92
TOTAL	246	45	40	58	36	31	46	12	514	1 566

All publications of 25 pages or more are priced; they comprised 24 per cent of titles released in 1983-84. The ABS does not charge for smaller publications which are issued more frequently to convey timely summary statistics and which have a relatively short life.

All publication mailing lists are reviewed each year. At 30 June 1984 there were about 28 000 names on these lists, an increase of 4 000 during the year.

During 1983-84 270 000 copies of microfiche and 785 copies of standard data tape releases were issued.

It is estimated that during 1983-84 the ABS answered some 290 000 ad hoc inquiries for statistical information, received by mail, telephone and personal visits to its offices. This represented an increase of about 20 000 inquiries (or 7 per cent) over 1982-83.

Data management

During 1983-84 a major task of the data management program continued to be to co-ordinate, monitor and provide assistance in the redesign and implementation of the various new computer processing systems in the ABS. The program has also contributed to the development of longer term computing strategies.

A further activity of the program is to provide a central focus on problems relating to the description and organisation of statistical data.

Work is proceeding on the production of an updated register of ABS statistical collections. Initially the catalogue will comprise a record of all ABS collections undertaken in the period July 1980 to June 1983. Additional information relating to statistical collections carried out by other government departments will be added subsequently. The register will be used in the co-ordination of statistical collections by Commonwealth agencies.

Statistics legislation

Last year's Annual Report contained details of significant changes to the legislation governing the operations of the ABS. The purpose of the changes was to enable the ABS to provide a better statistical service to governments and to the public generally, and to assist in further co-ordinating government statistical activities. Two illustrations are outlined below.

Disclosure of lists of names and addresses

The Australian Statistician is authorised, under specified conditions, to release lists of names and addresses of businesses and organisations, together with indicators of their type of legal entity, activity or industry and of their size classification, to Commonwealth or State departments and authorities for use for specified non-regulatory purposes. In 1983-84 two such lists were released to Commonwealth agencies for use in the conduct of their own surveys. A list of manufacturing establishments was released to the Australian Bureau of Transport Economics, for use as a basis for the dispatch of forms for a survey of freight consignments by manufacturers. A list of Queensland non-government schools was released to the Commonwealth Schools Commission, for use as a basis for the dispatch of forms for the annual non-government schools census for 1984.

Disclosure of unidentified information

The Australian Statistician is authorised to release, for statistical purposes and under specified conditions, individual statistical records where the records are not likely to be identified as relating to a particular person or organisation. During 1983-84 this provision was used to release sample data tapes from the 1981 Population Census, the 1977-78 Australian Health Survey and the June 1983 Survey of Household Energy Use.

Co-ordination

The ABS maintains contact with Commonwealth and State government departments and authorities in order to be aware of their statistical activities, their use of existing statistical collections and their current and future statistical needs.

The Bureau also plays a continuing role in developing greater co-ordination of statistical activities across government agencies. In particular, it encourages the adoption of uniform standards and practices and fosters a co-ordinated approach to statistical development.

An important element of this work is the outposted officer service, through which ABS officers are located in other government departments and agencies. A complete list of departments and agencies to which ABS officers were outposted during 1983-84 is shown in Appendix 7. In addition, from time to time officers are outposted to provide short-term assistance on specific tasks for other departments.

In December 1983 the ABS notified Commonwealth departments and authorities of new arrangements and procedures for statistical co-ordination. The main objectives are to ensure the compatibility of statistics produced from different sources, avoid duplication in their collection, and minimise the effort involved by respondents and government agencies in statistical collections.

The procedures involve the preparation of reports, jointly by the ABS and the agency concerned, on existing and proposed collections of a defined size and nature. Reports cover such matters as the justification for the collection, the scope for greater efficiency of collection or reduction in the number of respondents, and the compatibility of the data sought with other statistical series. The outcome of the reports is advised to the Minister Assisting the Treasurer.

In the six months to June 1984, joint reports were completed for nine collections (seven new and two existing) conducted by seven agencies. In general, the co-ordination objectives outlined above were met.

At the State level, the ABS participates in the work of statistical co-ordination bodies established by State governments to co-ordinate the statistical activities and requirements of their departments and agencies. The co-ordination bodies provide a priorities-setting mechanism and means of formulating a single State view on statistical requirements and other issues.

Freedom of Information Act

During the year, the ABS received and responded to sixteen requests for access to documents under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. This compares with one request in the seven months during which the Act was in operation in 1982-83.

Facilitating access to available statistical information, subject to the confidentiality provisions of the Census and Statistics Act, is of course a major function of the Bureau and application of the provisions of the FOI Act within the ABS needs to be viewed against that background.

During the year, six requests under the FOI Act were made for statistical information which was publicly available on request and was supplied. Of the other ten requests, seven were granted in part; five of these related to a copy of an internal administrative document from which it was necessary to delete exempt material under relevant Sections of the FOI Act. One was a request for statistical data, some of which, under Section 38 of the FOI Act, could not be provided because of the confidentiality provisions of the Census and Statistics Act. The seventh was a request for a copy of personal documents, some of which were not available, and one of which required the deletion of exempt material under Section 41 of the FOI Act. This generated a further request for an amendment of certain records, which could not be accessed to because the documents referred to in the request did not exist. This led to a request for a review by the Principal Officer of the ABS, who upheld the decision not to amend the documents. The applicant subsequently asked the Commonwealth Ombudsman to review the Principal Officer's decision.

Of the three requests which were refused, one was from an employee for a personal document which did not exist, one was for statistical information which was not available and one was for statistical information which was confidential.

All of the requests were responded to within the statutory time limit; the average time taken was 28 days. Fees received for documents provided under the FOI Act amounted to \$155.

In view of the small number of requests involved, responsibility for matters relating to the operation of the FOI Act within the ABS is exercised by the Co-ordination Branch in Canberra. Authority for decision-making under the Act has been delegated to the Assistant Statistician (Level 1) in charge of this Branch. However, comprehensive information on the Act has been supplied to all ABS staff with an instruction that all FOI requests should be referred to the Branch immediately they are received. Officers of the Branch have attended

periodic meetings of the FOI Practitioners' Forum arranged by the Public Service Board. Other than the foregoing, no special arrangements have been found necessary.

Work entailed in implementing provisions of the FOI Act has engaged a substantial part of the time of one middle level officer during the year, plus the attention from time to time of a number of other officers—rather less than 1 staff year overall.

Public relations

At 30 June 1984, the Public Relations Unit had been in existence for 21 months. It continued to develop and implement information programs aimed at improving rates and quality of response to ABS statistical collections, encouraging better understanding of the scope and priorities involved in ABS programs, and encouraging better use of existing statistics.

The Unit carried out about 180 public information tasks related to these objectives. They included preparation and production of brochures; preparation and placement of news releases, articles and similar material; preparation of display material and arranging staff participation in exhibitions and conventions; and design and production of publicity and information material for the Household Expenditure Survey, the ABS graduate recruitment program and the Social Atlas of Australian Cities. There were increasing requests for information by representatives of the media and local and international businesses and organisations. These were satisfied by Unit staff or directed to ABS Information Services or appropriate subject-matter staff.

Among more specific activities were development, production and implementation of a public awareness program for the annual agricultural census and development of a public relations program aimed at improving response rates in the program of economic censuses and surveys, including the new Transport Industry Survey. Evaluation of these activities, particularly in connection with the manufacturing census, could have an important bearing on the scope and direction of ABS public relations activities.

Management services

Management services is responsible for personnel services, recruitment, industrial relations, staff development and training, financial control and accounting, general office services, accommodation, security, internal consultancy, establishments, methods, staff ceiling administration and internal audit.

The ABS invests heavily in staff development and training. In addition to the training in computing already referred to, officers spent a total of 58 staff years during 1983-84 on courses aimed at developing statistical, managerial and clerical skills.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Staff years</i>
Paid leave under studies assistance	30.4
In-house training	14.8
External courses and conferences	3.3
Interchange and other schemes	9.2

Although the workload has increased significantly in recent years both in terms of complexity and size, the number of staff working in management services has remained steady. This has restricted the scope for undertaking significant initiatives and most improvements in efficiency have been at the margin. In recognition of this situation a joint management review team has been examining the management services function across all offices of the ABS.

Appendix 1

DISTRIBUTION OF FULL-TIME OPERATIVE STAFF: 1983-84

Program	Average monthly staff numbers, 1983-84(a)									
	Canberra	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	NT	Total	
Executive	28	5	3	3	3	3	3	1	49	
National Accounts	48	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	51	
International Accounts	76	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	76	
Prices	44	17	15	9	8	6	4	4	107	
Public Finance	41	12	12	9	5	7	5	1	92	
Private Finance	46	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	46	
Agriculture	27	25	25	18	16	12	..	1	131	
Construction	15	18	15	10	6	6	3	1	74	
Transport and Tourism	22	6	5	13	4	4	1	1	56	
Mining and Energy	10	6	3	4	2	..	1	..	26	
Manufacturing	18	36	34	14	10	10	3	..	125	
Retailing and Wholesaling	14	15	13	9	5	5	3	1	65	
Economic Censuses System	18	7	6	2	1	1	1	..	36	
Enterprise Statistics	41	9	8	6	2	4	1	1	72	
Classification	27	1	1	1	1	1	..	..	32	
Economic Statistics Integration	10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	10	
Trade	76	..	..	3	9	1	9	..	98	
Social Surveys and Indicators	37	2	1	..	1	..	..	..	41	
Social Statistics	35	21	15	22	6	11	4	..	114	
Manpower	82	40	29	20	10	15	8	4	208	
Population Census	45	4	3	2	3	2	2	1	62	
Demography	29	15	12	9	6	4	3	3	81	
Data Services and Analysis	30	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	31	
Statistical Services	45	2	8	4	4	3	3	..	69	
Population Survey Operations	29	26	22	21	16	17	7	3	141	
Information Services	83	24	24	17	12	13	6	1	180	
Integrated Register	39	65	49	28	17	19	4	2	223	
Computer Technical Services and Planning	93	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	93	
Computer Applications	119	15	14	14	14	15	11	..	202	
Computer Operations and Software	156	42	34	30	23	22	16	..	323	
Co-ordination	30	4	6	4	3	4	..	..	51	
Data Management	12	1	1	1	1	1	1	..	18	
Establishments and Methods	21	3	2	1	1	1	..	..	29	
Finance and General Services	126	37	35	24	15	18	10	2	267	
Personnel Management	68	13	15	12	9	7	6	1	131	
Total	1 640	473	411	310	213	213	122	28	3 410	

(a) Excludes staff on long service leave, maternity leave, extended sick leave, etc for periods of twelve weeks or longer. Where officers undertake duties within more than one program they have been classified to that program which occupies most of their time. The symbol .. can mean either 'less than half' or 'nil'.

Appendix 2

TOP STRUCTURE AND STAFF OF THE ABS AT 30 JUNE 1984

Australian Statistician <i>R.J. Cameron, CB</i>	Deputy Statistician <i>A.R. Bagnall</i>
<i>Division</i>	<i>Branch</i>
Economic Accounts <i>D.W. Anderson</i>	National Accounts <i>K.R. Blackburn</i> Public Finance and Input-Output <i>J.E. Dulley</i> Prices <i>L.C. Clements</i> International Accounts <i>B.J. Dunlop</i>
Demography, Social and Manpower <i>F.D. Bagley</i>	Social <i>M. D. Giles</i> Manpower <i>G. Sarossy</i> Population Census and Demography <i>J.K. Cornish</i>
Economic Censuses and Surveys <i>F.J. von Reibnitz</i>	Trade, Transport and Private Finance <i>A.J. Whittington</i> Manufacturing, Construction and Distribution <i>R.P. Green</i> Primary Industries and Enterprise Statistics <i>J.F. Wilson</i>
Statistical and User Services <i>R.W. Edwards</i>	Statistical Services <i>D.C. Leaver</i> User Services <i>M.B. Booth</i> Integrated Register <i>B.N. Pink</i>
Computer Services <i>B.J. Harper</i>	Technical Services and Planning(a) <i>E.W.W. Miller</i> <i>J.V. Crocker</i> Applications <i>D.A. Harding</i> Operations and Software <i>B.H. Crook</i>
Co-ordination and Management <i>W. McLennan</i>	Management Services <i>J.W. Maurer</i> Co-ordination <i>P.G. Howell</i> Data Management <i>D.J. Trewin</i>

(a) This Branch is headed by a Senior Assistant Statistician, supported by an Assistant Statistician.

TOP STRUCTURE AND STAFF OF THE ABS AS AT 30 JUNE 1984—continued

The offices in State capitals and in Darwin were headed by:

Sydney	T.J. Skinner
Melbourne	E.D. Bourke
Brisbane	O.M. May, OBE, VRD
Perth	W.M. Bartlett
Adelaide	G.C. Sims
Hobart	D.N. Allen
Darwin	B. Thomson (acting)

Appendix 3

EXPENDITURE AND RECEIPTS: 1982-83, 1983-84 AND ESTIMATES: 1984-85
(\$' 000)

	<i>Actual 1982-83</i>	<i>Actual 1983-84</i>	<i>Estimated 1984-85(a)</i>
EXPENDITURE			
Salaries	71 381	75 869	80 293
Overtime	615	698	780
<i>Total subdivision 1</i>	<i>71 996</i>	<i>76 567</i>	<i>81 073</i>
Travel and subsistence	1 450	1 666	1 792
Office requisites	3 784	4 239	5 825
Postage and telephones	3 818	4 033	4 200
Computer services	4 796	4 489	4 760
Incidentals	1 477	1 790	2 465
<i>Total subdivision 2</i>	<i>15 325</i>	<i>16 217</i>	<i>19 042</i>
Payments to agents	4 032	4 574	5 443
<i>Total subdivision 3</i>	<i>4 032</i>	<i>4 574</i>	<i>5 443</i>
<i>Total division</i>	<i>91 354</i>	<i>97 358</i>	<i>105 558</i>
<i>Plant and equipment(b)</i>	<i>6 958</i>	<i>1 915</i>	<i>10 060</i>
Special Appropriation—			
Australian Statistician	65	68	69
ASAC	11	11	16
Ethnicity Committee	1	2	—
<i>Total Special Appropriation</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>85</i>
<i>Total expenditure</i>	<i>98 389</i>	<i>99 353</i>	<i>115 703</i>
RECEIPTS			
Proceeds from 'for sale' publications(c)	298	418	566
Proceeds from sale of special compilations of foreign trade statistics	182	197	200
Recovery of costs for use of ABS computers by client organisations	995	469	10
Miscellaneous	169	216	191
<i>Total receipts</i>	<i>1 644</i>	<i>1 300</i>	<i>967</i>

(a) As included in Appropriation Bills Nos 1 and 2 except for Special Appropriation.

(b) Includes expenditure on the Computer Re-equipment Program. Computers with a trade-in value of \$1.8 million have been returned to the Department of Administrative Services.

(c) Excludes receipts by AGPS from sales of ABS publications.

Note: Any differences between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

Appendix 4

DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENDITURE BY PROGRAM: 1981-82 TO 1983-84

The following table shows total ABS expenditure for the years 1981-82 to 1983-84 allocated to statistical and service programs. The allocation of certain components of expenditure, eg salaries, is based on actual resource usage by individual programs but others, eg postage and telephones, are distributed on a pro rata basis. The table also shows an estimate of the cost of individual statistical programs, after allocating costs of service programs according to estimates of their use by individual statistical programs. Some of the year-to-year movements reflect the timing of periodic collections.

Program	<i>Estimated expenditure</i>								
	1981-82			1982-83			1983-84		
	Direct	Total(a)	%	Direct	Total(a)	%	Direct	Total(a)	%
	\$'000	\$'000	%	\$'000	\$'000	%	\$'000	\$'000	%
Executive	1 986	..	..	2 200	..	..	2 390	..	..
National Accounts(b)	1 482	2 436	3.0	1 495	2 372	2.7	1 525	2 563	2.7
International Accounts	1 423	2 302	2.8	1 630	2 570	2.9	2 215	3 682	4.0
Prices	2 543	3 593	4.5	2 580	3 724	4.2	2 846	4 107	4.4
Public Finance	2 079	3 763	4.7	2 262	4 179	4.8	2 471	4 883	5.2
Private Finance	995	1 530	1.9	1 071	1 699	1.9	1 183	2 004	2.2
Agriculture	3 776	8 124	10.1	3 318	8 038	9.2	2 927	7 589	8.1
Construction	1 757	3 545	4.4	1 638	3 504	4.0	1 708	3 380	3.6
Transport and Tourism	1 294	3 666	4.5	1 842	5 135	5.9	1 546	6 423	6.9
Mining and Energy	637	1 442	1.6	695	1 644	1.9	665	1 628	1.7
Manufacturing	2 641	6 281	7.8	2 738	6 561	7.5	2 884	6 698	7.2
Retailing and Wholesaling	2 244	7 309	9.1	2 071	6 529	7.5	1 531	4 831	5.2
Economic Censuses System	732	..	..	858	..	..	863	..	..
Enterprise Statistics	1 226	2 914	3.6	1 593	3 906	4.5	1 761	3 813	4.1
Classification	891	..	..	1 031	..	..	925	..	..
Economic Statistics Integration	410	..	..	683	..	..	313	..	..
Trade	2 604	5 562	6.8	2 303	5 024	5.7	2 466	4 981	5.3
Social Surveys and Indicators	527	2 051	2.5	809	1 799	2.1	1 195	3 709	4.0
Social Statistics	2 654	5 746	7.1	2 551	7 132	8.1	2 662	6 655	7.1
Manpower	3 468	14 924	18.4	3 496	18 256	20.8	5 227	21 004	22.5
Population Census(c) Demography	1 692	3 544	4.4	1 810	3 898	4.4	1 837	3 590	3.9

DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENDITURE BY PROGRAM: 1981-82 TO 1983-84

—continued

Program	Estimated expenditure								
	1981-82			1982-83			1983-84		
	Direct	Total(a)	%	Direct	Total(a)	%	Direct	Total(a)	%
Data Services and Analysis	\$'000	\$'000	%	\$'000	\$'000	%	\$'000	\$'000	%
Statistical Services	794	836	1.0	797	797	0.9	907	866	0.9
Population Survey Operations	1 721	..	..	1 925	..	..	2 011	..	..
Information Services	7 993	..	..	9 580	..	..	10 001	..	..
Integrated Register	4 417	..	..	5 024	..	..	5 212	..	..
Computer Technical Services and Planning	3 185	..	..	3 571	..	..	4 988	..	..
Computer Applications Computer Operations and Software	2 572	..	..	2 700	..	..	2 813	..	..
Co-ordination	5 472	..	..	5 411	..	..	5 401	..	..
Establishments and Methods	10 006	..	..	11 778	..	..	11 536	..	..
Finance and General Services	1 344	..	..	1 420	..	..	1 647	..	..
Personnel Management	477	..	..	497	..	..	585	..	..
Non-ABS(d)	780	..	..	839	..	..	870	..	..
Non-ABS(d)	4 809	..	..	4 987	..	..	5 295	..	..
Plant and equipment(e)	2 819	..	..	2 799	..	..	3 292	..	..
<i>Total excluding population census and capital cost of plant and equipment</i>	12 99	1.6	..	919	1.0	..	891	1.0	..
<i>Total including population census and capital cost of plant and equipment</i>	83 447	80 868	100.0	90 002	87 689	100.0	95 697	93 297	100.0
Population Census	27 514	30 093	..	1 430	3 744	..	1 741	4 141	..
Plant and equipment(e)	4 029	4 029	..	6 958	6 958	..	1 915	1 915	..
<i>Total including population census and capital cost of plant and equipment</i>	114 990	114 990	..	98 389	98 389	..	99 353	99 353	..

(a) Statistical programs only; includes estimated costs of service programs allocated in accordance with usage on statistical programs.

(b) The costs of collecting data used in compiling the national accounts are included in the respective subject matter programs.

(c) Excluded from distribution because of large annual variations during the quinquennial cycle.

(d) General services to other government departments and agencies of which the major component is the provision of ABS computer services.

(e) Includes expenditure on the Computer Re-equipment Program.

Note: Any differences between totals and sums of components are due to rounding.

Appendix 5

TOPICS OF MONTHLY AND SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTARY POPULATION SURVEYS

MONTHLY SUPPLEMENTARY SURVEYS

Recent topics

1983—

February	Labour force experience and mobility. Educational qualifications.
March	Health insurance arrangements. Persons not in the labour force. Educational status.
May	Initial entrance to the labour force. Persons leaving work.
June	Domestic energy usage.
July	Persons looking for work. Internal migration.
August	Weekly earnings of employees. Multiple job holding.
September	Persons not in the labour force.
October	Various topics specified by State governments.
November	Child care.

1984—

February	Labour force experience and mobility. Educational qualifications.
March	Persons not in the labour force. Migrant sponsorship and support.
May	Initial entrance to the labour force. Apprentices. Leave arrangements. Health insurance.
June	Ex-service personnel.

Planned topics

1984—

July	Persons looking for work. Family status. Internal migration.
August	Weekly earnings. Employment benefits.

TOPICS OF MONTHLY AND SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTARY POPULATION SURVEYS—*continued*

MONTHLY SUPPLEMENTARY SURVEYS

Planned topics

September	Persons not in the labour force. Retirement intentions.
October	Reserved for topics suggested by States.
November	Child care.
1985—	
February	Labour force experience and mobility. Educational qualifications.
March	Persons not in the labour force.
May	Transition from education to work. Re-entrants to the labour force.
June	Under-employment.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTARY SURVEYS

Recent topics

1979	Survey of Income, which collected information on amount and source of income, for individuals and households.
1981	Survey of Handicapped Persons, which was conducted as the ABS contribution to the International Year of the Disabled, and collected information on types and distribution of disabilities and handicaps in the population.
1982	Survey of Families, which collected information on various characteristics of different types of families, such as single parent families. It also collected information on patterns of work, such as shift work. Survey of Income, which was a repeat and an expansion of the 1979 survey.
1983	Survey of Health, Tourism and Crime Victims, which collected information on the incidence of certain diseases, health care, holiday trips, and the incidence and effects of certain types of crime.

Planned topics

1984	Household Expenditure Survey.
1985	Survey of Domestic Energy Usage.

The program for Special Supplementary Surveys from 1986 onwards is the subject of a review currently being undertaken by the ABS to consider the possibilities for satisfying the outstanding demands for surveys which cannot be met by its existing survey capacity.

Appendix 6

PROPOSALS TABLED IN PARLIAMENT: 1983-84

In accordance with section 6(3) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, the following proposals for collection of additional information for statistical purposes were tabled in both Houses of Parliament during 1983-84.

<i>Date tabled</i>	<i>Project</i>
24 August 1983	Survey of real estate agencies, reference year 1982-83. Survey of legal services, reference year 1982-83. Census of superannuation funds, reference year 1982-83. Survey of Australian direct investment abroad, September quarter 1983 and quarterly thereafter.
13 September 1983	Survey of public awareness and knowledge of welfare services in New South Wales, October 1983. Survey of housing preferences and intentions in Victoria and Western Australia, October 1983. Survey of care for the aged in Queensland, October 1983 Survey of alcohol consumption patterns in South Australia, October 1983. Survey of household fish consumption and non-commercial fishing activities in Tasmania, October 1983
17 November 1983	Survey of migrant status, March 1984.
30 November 1983	Survey of household expenditure, January to December 1984.
28 February 1984	Survey of non-trade foreign receipts and payments, commencing in July 1984 and monthly thereafter.
8 March 1984	Survey of foreign ownership and control of agriculture, March 1984. Exploratory collection of lending commitments by financial institutions, March 1984.
29 May 1984	Survey of transport industry, reference year 1983-84.

Appendix 7

LOCATION OF OUTPOSTED ABS OFFICERS: 1983-84

Commonwealth

Department of Aboriginal Affairs
Department of Aviation(a)
Department of Employment and Industrial Relations
Department of Health
Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
Department of Industry and Commerce
Department of Primary Industry
Department of Resources and Energy
Department of Social Security(b)
Department of Trade
Department of Transport
Bureau of Mineral Resources
Industries Assistance Commission
Australian Institute of Criminology(a)

State

New South Wales	—Department of Corrective Services(a) —Department of Youth and Community Services(a) —Department of Education(a) —Department of Health(a) —Housing Commission of New South Wales(a)
Victoria	—Department of Education(a) —Department of Management and Budget(a) —Health Commission(a)
Queensland	—Department of Health(a) —Department of Mines and Energy
Western Australia	—Department for Community Welfare(a) —Western Australian Fire Brigades Board(a) —Department of Treasury(a)
South Australia	—Department of the Premier and Cabinet —Department for Community Welfare(a) —Department of Transport(a) —Attorney-General's Department(a)
Tasmania	—Department for Community Welfare(a) —The Law Department(a)

(a) Fixed term posting.

(b) Including work on the Standardisation of Social Welfare Statistics (WELSTAT) project and on child care statistics.

Appendix 8

PROFESSIONAL PAPERS PRESENTED BY ABS OFFICERS: 1983-84

During 1983-84 officers of the ABS prepared the following professional papers:

B.R. Bacon: *The NIF-10 (National Income Forecasting) Model*. Presented to the UNESCO Regional Workshop on Databanks for Socio-Economic Statistics and Analysis, Melbourne, January 1984.

A.R. Bagnall: *Transport Statistics in the 1980's: The Challenges from an ABS Perspective*. Presented to the First Transport Information and Statistics Conference, Canberra, July 1983.

A.J. Barbetti: *Development of an Integrated Survey Design and Analysis Capability Using SAS*. Presented to Statistical Society of Australia 'STATCOMP '83' Conference, Sydney, July 1983.

D. Bartley and M. Hannan: *Software Tools for Data Management at the Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Presented to the Third Conference of the FACOM Users Association of Australia, Sydney, April 1984.

M.B. Booth: *Computer-Readable Data Available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics*. Presented to the UNESCO Regional Workshop on Databanks for Socio-Economic Statistics and Analysis, Melbourne, January 1984.

C.Y. Choi and O.B. Di Julio: *Estimating the Overseas Component of Population Growth*. Presented to the 1983 ISI Conference, Madrid, September 1983.

B. Fitzpatrick: *Interfacing a Disparate User Population to its Data*. Presented at the Symposium on Data Base Management Systems, Sydney, November 1983.

P.K. Gretton: *Input-Output Tables in the ESCAP Region—Australia*. Presented to Asia-Pacific Meeting of Statisticians on Input-Output Tables, Tokyo, March 1984.

B.N. Pink: *ABS Transport Statistics: Reflecting Contemporary Requirements and Priorities of Users*. Presented to the First Transport Information and Statistics Conference, Canberra, July 1983.

T. Travers: *Case Study in Consumer Price Indexes—The Australian Experience*. Presented to the Pacific Subregional Workshop on Price Statistics conducted by ESCAP, Port Vila, Vanuatu, October 1983.